

and can cause debilitating and fatal diseases, makes smokers smell, sets an appalling example to children, and involves repeatedly spending money that could otherwise be used for, well, living life to the full. So how on earth can cigarette companies reassure women who smoke, and make those who have not yet started, think it is part of a normal, desirable lifestyle?

One way, it seems, is to give women their own magazine, cleverly mixing all the most enduring female aspirations and interests with pervasive imagery portraying smoking as a normal, rational activity, an integral part of the perceived ideal lifestyle of American women in the year 2000. Brown & Williamson, BAT's north American subsidiary, has done just that: it is funding a magazine misleadingly called *The Art of Simple Living*, that is apparently being sent, unsolicited, to women who subscribe to selfhelp and health and fitness publications.

Redolent of the American dream of happy married life, motherhood, and apple pie (the 21st century version), typical articles include "How to unclutter your emotional life", "Bird watching—a family affair", and even "Fitness loves company". Seen in their true context, some are sentimental to the point of nausea, outside the spectrum of even the cruellest satirist's palette, such as "Parent talk: wheel life episodes—a dad watches his girls grow up". Another fine example could have been tailored for those who lose a family member from tobacco: "Writing simple, touching notes for every occasion".

Cigarette advertisements abound—in one issue, all but two of the adverts are for cigarettes. There are competitions such as "Win a vacation in paradise", adverts for trinkets—"Express your own unique style with the Misty Rainbow Collection"—and not forgetting to flatter the intellect of readers, "The thinking person's crossword puzzle", part of a Carlton advert. And bowing to ever increasing hostile public reaction to passive smoking, we learn that "Superslim Capri means less smoke for those around you".

The publisher's statement says the magazine "is edited for a select audience of modern women who are interested in personal and spiritual growth, as well as in fulfilling their responsibilities to other people". So that's all right then. And financial support? This, the publishers admit, "is provided by the B&W Tobacco Corporation, which does not control editorial content. It is published for adult women". Despite the dis-

claimer, there are obvious links between much of the content and the kinds of concerns that women have, and the issues that are bound up with their smoking. And like some cigarette adverts, many of the articles counter women's concerns about smoking, such as those about fitness or parenting. There does not appear to be any way to subscribe to this publication, and even better news is that anyone who is sent it can ask to be removed from the "select Simple Living mailing list".

Japan: streets unsafe as machines prey on children

Tobacco control advocates concerned with youth access issues should dread the negative utopia where underage smokers purchase cigarettes almost anytime and anywhere. Sadly, such a utopia exists in Japan where over 500 000 cigarette vending machines generate over 40% of the total sales of cigarettes (1997 figures).

Although most shopkeepers in Japan will willingly sell tobacco products directly to minors, they do not need to. Just outside the ubiquitous convenience stores and supermarkets, on virtually every urban street corner, and even at unattended locations on rural highways, tobacco vending machines give young people unlimited opportunity to buy tobacco products with no one watching.

This unrestricted access brings predictable results. The legal minimum age for the purchase of tobacco in Japan is 20 years. However, survey statistics published by the Japanese

Ministry of Health last November indicate high rates of underage smoking via several indicators. Most notably, 19% of 15 to 20 year old men, and 4.3% of 15 to 20 year old women, identified themselves as smokers. Moreover, although the survey avoided counting smokers younger than 15 years old, among all smokers in Japan, roughly 8% of men and 6% of women said they started to smoke before they were 15 years old. Overall, 42% of all male smokers and 35% of all female smokers reported becoming habitual smokers before their 20th birthdays.

Not surprisingly, vending machines have long been a point of contention relating to youth access in Japan. In 1996, the tobacco industry announced voluntary measures to shut down outdoor cigarette vending machines between 11 pm and 5 am. Announced as a measure to limit youth access, tobacco industry promoters were merely blowing smoke in the faces of tobacco control advocates.

One guesses that the late night shutdown was designed primarily to help retailers reduce vandalism, because it could not possibly have been a bona fide youth access remedy. Having no need to sneak out for their purchases, most of Japan's underage smokers were fast asleep during the early morning hours, not out wandering the streets.

Statistics make the story obvious. Japan's Tobacco Problems Information Centre estimates that minors consumed approximately three billion packs of cigarettes in 1996. This translates to roughly eight million packs obtained by minors each day. If late night vending machine operations



Cigarette vending machines on the streets of cities in Japan, like these ones seen in Kobe last November, make access easy for children.

were young people's primary access point to obtain tobacco products, one would certainly expect the streets to have been much busier after hours.

Ironically, Japan prides itself on being the world's first nation to legally prohibit underage smoking in 1900. But that law gets no attention from law enforcement officials or prosecuting authorities. Between 1991 and 1996, public prosecutors received an average of only five cases of reported violations per year; every case closed without indictment or punishment.

A global ban on vending machines can be included in the forthcoming Framework Convention on tobacco control. Japan's accession to such a prohibition would be welcome. However, many readers will remember that the World Health Organization first recommended national prohibition of cigarette vending machines in 1975. Since that time, the number of tobacco vending machines in Japan has nearly doubled. One factor may be Japan's low crime rates, which generally reduce losses from vandalism for vending machine operators. But Japan's streets cannot be regarded as safe while deadly addictive products are virtually handed to its children on every corner.

MARK A LEVIN

*William S Richardson School of Law
University of Hawaii at Mānoa, USA
levin@hawaii.edu*

Kazakhstan: PM's "PR department" ignores tobacco

When Philip Morris (PM) signed up former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher as a part time consultant on a three year contract reportedly worth US\$2 million, one of her first tasks was to travel to Kazakhstan, to help persuade its leaders to sell PM a major stake in the state tobacco company. The minister for agriculture proposed selling off only 40% of the company, but President Nazarbayev overruled him and PM got total control over the former state tobacco factory.

Since then, PM's influence has, if anything, become even more powerful, and some journalists, having no doubt learned during the country's recent history to take a cynical look behind the official line, refer to the Kazakhstan government as "the public relations department of Philip Morris". Most outrageous of its achievements, many believe, was when the government decided to designate a day of memory to honour victims of mass hunger in the 1930s, when about half of the population died. It could have chosen any day of the year, but the one selected from the 365 available was May 31. Not surprisingly, since 1996, World No

Tobacco Day has been totally ignored in Kazakhstan. Health advocates, convinced this was not by chance, see it as a classic piece of tobacco industry hypocrisy to use victims of hunger to forget about victims of tobacco.

Representatives of PM have direct contact with President Nazarbayev and he has openly helped them to solve tax and customs problems. When smuggled cigarettes produced in the USA were captured at the airport, the names of the companies involved were not disclosed. Robert May, PM's representative in Almaty, estimated that the state budget loses US\$1.3 million each year from smuggling, and promised rewards for customs officers. When the speaker of the Kazakh parliament called for an increase in tobacco taxes last year (excise tax is extremely low, less than a third of the rate in the Ukraine), the only result was a significant increase in import duties on tobacco imported from Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

There is a great deal of tobacco advertising on television, and streets are overwhelmed by billboards featuring the Marlboro man, together with some "prevention" messages, in which PM appeals to underage smokers to "make the right choice". In the government's draft "Health of the Nation" programme, however, tobacco is ignored.

KONSTANTIN KRASOVSKY

*ADIC-Ukraine
adic@info.kiev.ua*



India: who's boss in the new world order? Look who's boss now. This advert for a new brand launched by Godfrey Phillips, a Philip Morris subsidiary, portrays a young Indian film director at work on a film shoot. The members of his crew are westerners, and the advert appears to exploit national pride in India's internationally successful movie industry. The cigarette makers said the setting of the advert, an adventurous and challenging shoot on water, fitted with the core brand values of daring dynamism with a spirit of outdoor adventure.

Tobacco's Gulf war against health

No country is too small to escape the attentions of multinational tobacco companies, especially if they have special political or cultural influence. Recent experience shows that even in the comparatively small, albeit oil rich countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the industry is trying to forestall serious action with child "education" campaigns, and to buy political favours with gifts to worthy charitable organisations. Underneath the intended gloss of responsibility and generosity, however, lie the familiar stains of lobbying and propaganda efforts every bit as sinister as those found in the companies' home countries, as shown by internal documents released under US litigation settlements.

Earlier this year, the Qatar Handicapped Educational Centre received a Philip Morris (PM) "grant for charitable institutions" in appreciation of its support for handicapped